

*The happy Adaptation of the Sabbath-school System to the peculiar  
Wants of our Age and Country.*

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A

# S E R M O N,

PREACHED

AT THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-  
SCHOOL UNION,

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 20th, 1839.

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AT THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS  
OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL UNION

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 1893

BY E. S. SCHWETTER, D.D.

RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS  
OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL UNION

PHILADELPHIA

AMERICAN SCHOOL UNION

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## A SERMON.

*"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."*—Proverbs xxii. 6.

THE words which we have selected as the basis of our discussion on this solemn occasion, inculcate an important and well-established fact in the history of the human mind. They must not, however, be interpreted too literally, as is evident from the life of the very individual who penned them. Solomon himself, though early taught "the way in which he should go," when he became old, did certainly and most grievously depart from it. The fact inculcated by our text is not a law of inert, physical nature, resulting solely from the omnipotent and resistless agency of the Creator upon unintelligent matter, and therefore always invariably the same. It is true the planetary orbs, though some of them occupy years in completing their revolution, reach their starting point without the variation of a single second; and though they speed their course millions of miles through the regions of space, deviate not an inch from their appointed track. But the law, or fact, spoken of in our text, is of a different character. It refers to moral influence exerted on moral agents, on intelligent beings, whom God, for reasons of the greatest good, has determined to constitute and continue voluntary agents through life. And all experience shows that the effects of moral



means cannot be graduated by pounds and ounces like the power of steam, nor measured by inches and miles like the revolutions of the heavenly orbs. Accordingly religious education does not secure a religious after-life with the same absolute certainty with which matter gravitates towards the greater mass, or the planetary bodies revolve around their centre. But the text expresses the indisputable fact, which you have all seen exemplified in daily life, that *the inculcation of religious truth on the pliant mind of youth, is naturally adapted to produce a salutary influence; and that, aided by divine grace, it generally secures the fidelity of its recipients in subsequent life.*

The truth of this doctrine is clearly seen in the life of individuals and in the history of the church.

When we listen to the testimony of ecclesiastical historians on the great fidelity of the early Christians in instructing candidates for church privileges, when we hear them say that from six months to two years were spent in specific preparatory training, we need not wonder at their devotedness to the cause and their fidelity amid persecutions; but must acknowledge the salutary influence of ample and careful religious instruction even in later years, if it was not given in early life. In the middle ages religious instruction was much neglected. Although some edicts were passed in the earlier part of this period, such as those of the synod of Maynz, in the reign of Charlemagne, encouraging parents to send their children to school, and exhorting parents themselves to learn the Apostles' creed, and the Lord's prayer, which, says the edict, every Christian should know; and although this same century (the ninth) produced the first German



catechism, by Ottfried; the religious instruction of the young participated largely, both as cause and effect, in the darkness of the dark ages. Yet even this period presents a duplicate illustration of the doctrine of our text, in the degeneracy of the Romish church on the one hand, where religious education was neglected; and on the other, in the devotedness and spiritual prosperity of those memorable witnesses for the truth, the Waldenses, whose children were most carefully taught an elementary course of Christian instruction which is still extant, and for doctrinal purity and evangelical spirit more resembles a Protestant production of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, than of the twelfth.

In the age of the blessed Reformation, that most interesting period since the days of the apostles, fraught with consequences not even yet fully developed, more general attention was devoted to religious education. One of the principal means of perpetuating that memorable ecclesiastical revolution, was the careful training of the rising generation in the unadulterated doctrines of the Bible. Luther gave a new impulse to this cause by publishing two catechisms, one for children and the other for teachers: because, as he himself states, he found a most lamentable ignorance among both, during the visitation of the churches, undertaken by order of the Elector John. Calvin also prepared a catechism in French, and subsequently translated it into Latin, which was long in high repute, though not adopted by his followers in England or in this country. And with what fidelity and manifest fruits the different Protestant churches in other countries, and especially the church in Scot-



land, laboured to train their children in the way they should go, is well known.

During the thirty years' war, whilst Protestants were supporting a desperate and unequal struggle for existence against the encroachments of the Papists, in which Sweden's noble-hearted monarch poured out his blood upon the plains of Lutzen, a generation grew up whose education was unavoidably neglected; and their influence was felt in the prevalence of vice, in the languishing state of piety in the church, in the dead formality and embittered contentions which shook the very foundations of Protestantism. Spener, the father of the modern revival of religion in Germany, also revived attention to this neglected subject in later times, and with his name may justly be associated those of Watts, Franke, Teller, Seidel, Loescher, and others. In short, the benign and blessed influence of religious education, even when imperfectly given, is always evident; but to no mode of instruction can we appeal with more confidence for triumphant demonstrations of this truth, than to the short and simple, but at the same time the rich and fruitful annals of the American Sunday-school Union, on whose behalf we are now assembled. This system has its peculiarities; the age in which we live has its peculiarities; we are, in a national point of view, "a peculiar people;" and as it would seem to be not an unapt theme, we purpose on this occasion to exhibit

**THE HAPPY ADAPTATION OF THE SABBATH-SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE PECULIAR WANTS OF OUR AGE AND COUNTRY.**

The Sabbath-school system is truly a noble institution. It created no new elements in the human soul,



and discovered none that were unknown before ; but, by a most felicitous combination of arrangements, it calls into full play the whole intellectual and moral machinery of the youthful mind, and employs the long dormant resources of the Christian community in an admirable manner. This system has its peculiarities. When faithfully carried out, according to the principles of the American Sunday-school Union, it may be characterized as giving prominence to the Bible, as being free from sectarianism, as reaching the entire population, as employing also lay agency, and as beginning with the earliest age.

Before the era of Sunday-schools, the duty of religious instruction was supposed to appertain only to ministers, and, in some countries, also to the village schoolmaster. But since the happy conception of the immortal Raikes, the whole body of Christians may be literally "priests unto God," the number of instructors can be multiplied to any desirable extent, and the purifying, elevating, saving knowledge of the truth of God, be carried to every inmate of every hovel in the land. Indeed the felicitous tendency of this system to improve the public morals, to diminish the business of our criminal courts, to empty our jails and penitentiaries, and to fill our churches, is a matter of statistical demonstration, and stands confessed by all. Let us contemplate some definite features of this tendency.

I. *The Sabbath-school system is well adapted to correct the prevailing disregard of law and constituted authorities, and thus to invigorate the protective influence of our government.*

The duties resulting from the social compact never



have been and never will be faithfully discharged by a people destitute of integrity, of moral honesty. In despotic and arbitrary governments the absence of this moral principle is in some degree compensated by what are termed the five strong points of monarchy, a hereditary monarch, a nobility, a standing army, an established church, and a strong police. But in a republic, whose cardinal features are the direct antitheses of these points, in which all power is ultimately wielded by the *people*, it is evident that the destiny of the government is indissolubly linked to the character of the people, and the grand pillars which must sustain the fabric, are industry, intelligence, and, above all, virtue among the mass of the population. But moral integrity has never prevailed in any nation, without some religion. For the belief of a God, and of rewards and punishments, in the administration of which our secret conduct will be brought into retribution, lies at the very foundation of popular virtue. It is this that confers sanctity upon an oath; to this we are chiefly indebted for whatever honesty is found in our legislative halls, for whatever justice and impartiality are witnessed in the administration of our civil and judiciary institutions. If, then, the celebrated Greek historian Polybius could with truth applaud the imperfect religion of pagan Rome, and pronounce it the most important among all her useful institutions, and that which chiefly sustained the republic; with how much greater propriety may we transfer the same praises to the purer and far nobler religion of the gospel!

But the population of this infant republic is exposed to various and peculiar demoralizing influences. The



immense resources of our country, which are daily opening before us, and presenting to all the alluring, the dazzling, the bewildering prospect of speedy wealth, have a natural tendency to unsettle the minds of any people, to destroy their industry and beget habits of speculation, of corruption, injustice, and dishonesty. Wealth also, when attained, tends to idleness, extravagance, and luxury. Nor have we only our indigenous evils to contend with. Exotic vices are daily transplanted to our land by the vast multitudes of foreigners who are annually flowing in upon us, and introducing every form of iniquity which has sprung up on the rank soil of European degeneracy. Our population, therefore, stands in special need of religious influence, of an influence which shall embrace within its kindly sympathies the entire population, and especially the poor and vicious, who either will not, or cannot provide instruction for themselves. But by what means can the entire population be thus reached, except by Sabbath-schools? You all reply, by none. Catechization by the pastor of each church is indeed a highly valuable practice, and has accomplished great good. But it has never reached much beyond the children of the church. Nothing ever brought the great mass of the rising generation under the influence of gospel tuition until Sabbath-schools accomplished the glorious work. They are therefore, under God, our best reliance amid the dangers which threaten our infant republic on every side. The scenes of popular violence, the mobs, the Lynch processes, the riots of every kind which disgrace the recent annals of our country, and have made our most enlightened statesmen tremble for the safety

of the republic, are all the fruits of popular ignorance, and popular depravity, of recklessness of duty, and disregard of constituted authorities, resulting from destitution of religious principle. Let, therefore, the true patriot, let every friend of his country contribute his influence and his aid to the cause of Sabbath-schools, until they are established in every corner of our entire land, and until the whole mass of our rising population, and especially of emigrants, is brought within their control, and taught from divine authority that "the powers that be are ordained of God, and whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God;" until they are taught to pray for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; taught to be afraid to do evil, because the civil ruler beareth not the sword in vain, but acts as the minister of that God who will hereafter himself become a terror to evil doers, even if they escape their merited punishment on earth!

II. *Sabbath-schools tend to perpetuate the separation between church and state, and turn it to the highest advantage of spiritual religion.*

This opinion may, perhaps, appear singular, to those who have gleaned all their knowledge on this subject from the unprincipled assertions of political demagogues; but its truth will become evident upon a few moments' serious examination of facts. Our blessed Saviour himself distinctly interdicted such a union. To his disciples, who at first expected the Messiah to be a temporal prince, he says explicitly: "my kingdom is not of this world," is not a temporal kingdom. He told them that the kingdom which he came to establish was not at all inconsistent with



their allegiance to the Roman emperor, and therefore, it was right that, as citizens of his kingdom, they should pay tribute to the emperor, and thus "give unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

He nowhere either authorizes or directs ministers of the gospel to exercise any political power by virtue of their religious office. He nowhere authorizes political officers, as such, to interfere in the affairs of his church, or to exercise any power in it. On the contrary, for every duty enjoined on the church, he has also appointed some individual in the church, on whom its performance devolves. The idea, that the civil ruler of a country who succeeds to office by hereditary descent, without the shadow of security even for decent morality of character, should in any sense be the head of that people who are to be separated from the world as a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and from whose midst every one is to be ejected who violates the precepts of our holy religion, is too preposterous to need comment at the present day. And that such an officer, who is appointed without any ecclesiastical qualifications, should be the source of all ecclesiastical power to others, and the judge of ecclesiastical qualifications in them, will be admitted by all to be, in view of the New Testament, an ecclesiastical absurdity. Such are the doctrines of Christianity concerning the union between church and state, held by the entire body of Protestant Christians in our land. What better method then can be adopted to prevent this evil than to bring the whole mass of our rising population under the influence of the Scriptures, which inculcate these views?

The paramount, the almost indelible influence of the early inculcation of opinions which we wish to perpetuate, is well understood by all who are acquainted with human nature. On this subject politicians might learn a profitable lesson from the late Emperor of the French. When Napoleon desired to place his ill-gotten imperial power on a firm basis, he ordered the dignitaries of the Romish church to prepare a catechism, including a chapter in which his right to the imperial crown was expressly taught on the ground of his having been called to the throne by God, in times of peculiar difficulty, and endowed for this purpose with extraordinary civic and military talents. Such a catechism was actually prepared. It was published in 1806, with the sanction of Caprara, the pope's legate, and with the emperor's decree prefixed, ordering it to be introduced into all the churches: the frequency and extent of the emperor's wars, however, allowed little time for the instruction even of children.

But Sabbath-schools have not merely the advantage of being the only method by which the entire rising population of our country can be imbued with correct views on this subject; they have the farther recommendation of being taught, not by ministers, who, if unprincipled men, might regard it as their private interest to inculcate different views, but by laymen themselves, whose interest must always lie on the side of opposition to this union; for it is from the body of the people, both Christians and others, that power and wealth are wrested by it, to be conferred on the clergy. Accordingly, although the union between church and state has existed about fifteen hundred



years in nearly all the nations of Europe; *it never has been in a single instance, and never will be introduced by the voice of the body of Christians.* It was originally established by the unlimited power of one man, the Emperor Constantine, from reasons of state policy; for, whatever may have been the subsequent improvement of his character, he certainly could not have been a Christian, at a time when he was making large donations to heathen temples, when he celebrated the apotheosis of his father, and appeared in public decorated with the insignia of Jupiter and Mars, of Hercules and Apollo. Christians had become too numerous in the empire to be either suppressed or despised. They were moreover his most trusty and faithful subjects. Their religion was calculated to impress the same character on all who embraced it, and therefore its avowal by the court was wise and politic. The same considerations seem to have weighed, more or less, with Theodosius the first and second, with Theodoric and Justinian, who confirmed the union by additional enactments.

It is from political demagogues, and not from the mass of Christians in our country, whose interest is entirely different, that we have most to fear. Do we not, even now, find party leaders addressing the prejudices of particular denominations to gain their votes and enlist their influence? These are the men who may, in the course of time, find their advantage in secretly promising certain preferences to corrupt ecclesiastical leaders, first by favouring their sect in appointments to office, and eventually in something more permanent. That a Protestant population, well educated in the principles of Christianity, with the



sad experience of former ages of grievance from this union before them, could be induced again voluntarily to bow their necks to the yoke, and re-establish that union now happily severed, is scarcely within the bounds of credibility, especially when we recollect the lesson taught by history, that power once granted to the many is never voluntarily returned to the few.

But Christians should advocate the divorce of church and state, and encourage Sabbath-schools as the best means of perpetuating it, for additional reasons. That union is an almost insuperable obstacle to the highest spiritual improvement of the church, and the speedy dissemination of the gospel over the earth. The situation of the minister who is supported by the state, and who may be dismissed at pleasure, is very unfavourable to the impartial and fearless inculcation of the truth on those from whom he derives his daily bread. There is unavoidably an influence thrown around the dependent servant of Christ, which prevents him from fully applying the principles of Christianity to the maxims of civil government, and to the conduct of civil officers. But it was the design of the Saviour, that his religion should reach and mould the character of all men, of governors as well as governed; and that it should purify and elevate and regulate all the relations and institutions of the human family, not only social and domestic, literary and scientific, but also civil and political. Christianity has effected much to purify the social and domestic relations of men. She has elevated the condition of the female sex from degradation and cruelty to refinement and influence; she has mitigated the severity of the criminal code; she has banished suicide; she has



established associations to support the poor and to alleviate almost every form of human suffering; but she has failed to do as much for political governments. The dependence of her ministers on political rulers has prevented them from applying so fully the precepts of Christianity to political governments. The mother of all evils, war, that evil which brings in its train every other, which always stops the progress of piety and throws back the car of the Redeemer, can scarcely be said to be sensibly diminished in frequency. Yet holy seers have predicted that when Christianity prevails over the earth, men shall convert their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and shall learn war no more. If the wars in which Christians are embroiled, were always waged with some adjoining *heathen* nation, the latter might, in charity, be supposed the aggressors. But Christians have been almost constantly at war with Christians, and consequently their Christianity is not yet such as will prevail in that time, when we shall hear "of wars and rumours of war no more." Where church and state are separated, ministers and private Christians are under no restraint in dissenting from the views of their rulers; they have no private interest that will be sacrificed, their only interest is that of their common country. Even in a limited monarchy, therefore, if the popular branch of the government controls the purse, the people can greatly diminish the frequency of wars; but in a republican government, like ours, where the people, through their representatives, both declare and conduct wars, if the mass of the people be deeply imbued by the spirit of the Saviour, it is in the power of a single generation to



usher in millennial peace ! The practice of Christian wars, or rather let me say antichristian war, by so-called Christian nations, has been a melancholy impediment to the bloodless triumphs of the gospel among the heathen ! Listen to the reason assigned by the late Emperor of China for refusing to admit the Christian religion into his empire ? Hear it, O Christian people, and blush ! "*Because,*" said he, "*wherever Christians go, they whiten the soil with human bones.*" And a Turk, at Jerusalem, once said to Mr. Wolff the missionary, who lately visited this country, "Why do you come to us ?" The missionary replied, "To bring you peace." "Peace," replied the Turk, leading Mr. Wolff to a window, and pointing him to Mount Calvary, "there, upon the very spot where your Lord poured out his blood, the Mohammedan is obliged to interfere to prevent Christians from shedding the blood of each other !!" O ! if Christians had but acted out their principles as nations, and Christianity, as she traversed the different countries, had put an end to wars and bloodshed, I verily believe the moral omnipotence of this single feature would have long since convinced the heathen world of its heaven-descended origin ; would have opened, not only the Chinese empire for the reception of the Prince of peace, but also every heathen nation on the globe ; for it is well known that even the heathen populace regard war as the greatest of evils ; and for this very reason the heathen people would have welcomed Christianity even where their rulers felt no interest in it.

But time would fail me to enumerate all the evils of this unhappy and unholy alliance. It destroyed



the primitive simplicity of Christianity, and introduced pomp and splendour into the worship of that Saviour who had not where to lay his head. It gave undue authority to the decision and prescriptions of synods and councils; for they were issued under imperial sanction, and even Constantine himself already enforced absolute submission to them. Let, therefore, Christians earnestly labour against this antichristian conversion of the Saviour's kingdom into a kingdom of this world, and instil these views into the minds of the rising generation as an important topic of Sabbath-school instruction.

III. The Sabbath-school system is admirably adapted *to train up a generation of Christians for millennial plans and millennial action.*

It is admitted that in the halcyon days of millennial triumph, the minor peculiarities of sect will be thrown into the background, and Christians meet on the broad platform of the Bible: that they will give prominence to the things in which they agree; that they will husband their resources by fraternal concert and co-operation; and that gigantic schemes will be undertaken for the conversion of the world. Now it must be obvious to all that the Sabbath-school system of the American Sunday-school Union, if faithfully carried out, is happily adapted to answer all these indications.

*It makes the book of God the principal book of instruction.* The Bible was the grand instrument of the reformation of the sixteenth century, and will, doubtless, be equally blessed in accelerating the millennial reign. Hitherto, the Bible has not been brought fully to bear on the character of the mass of our community. It is indeed the opprobrium of Christian



nations, that they adopt the Bible rather by profession than practice. Whilst in Mohammedan countries, the Koran, with all its absurdities, is the book of instruction in all their institutions, and studied by all classes and ages, the Scriptures are rarely taught in our schools. The consequence is, that whilst the entire nations professing Mohammedanism are instructed in their religion and become Mohammedan nations, not one-tenth part of our population is instructed in the Scriptures. The book of God is not fairly brought into contact with the national mind, and we are not a Christian *nation* in the same degree in which Mohammedan nations are nations of Mohammedans! Christian institutions spend ten times as much time in the study of heathen authors, as of the book of books. Christian students are often more deeply imbued with the spirit of heathenism than of Christianity, filled with more admiration for the military achievements of a Cesar, a Hannibal, or an Alexander, than for the sublime, the forgiving spirit of the Prince of peace, in whose view those military heroes are little else than national murderers! In short, there is but too much truth in the charge that we profess one religion, and educate our youth in another. But Sabbath-schools are happily calculated to remedy the defect. In them the Bible is the chief book of instruction, it is taught by serious and religious persons; it may be extended to the youth of the whole nation, and cannot fail to exert a most benign influence on us as a Christian people. If Sabbath-schools were universally introduced, and the Scriptures were taught in our common schools, and if our colleges and academies would exclude the immoral and antichristian portions of the



classics, and introduce in their stead more extensive study of the word of God, of its history, its archeology, its philology, its cardinal doctrines and duties, we doubt not that incalculable gain would accrue to the cause of truth and holiness, and the standard of Christianity be visibly raised.

Again, the Sabbath-school system *gives prominence to the common ground of Protestant doctrine*, and particularly demonstrates, that the things in which we agree are not only sufficient for salvation, but also for ecclesiastical acknowledgment and fraternity. From the books which the American Sunday-school Union circulates are carefully excluded all topics of sectarian difference. The publication committee embraces members of at least four Christian denominations; and every thing is excluded to which either member of the committee objects. The great doctrines of salvation are thus inscribed on almost every page, and the minds of youth are imbued not with sectarianism but with a species of Christianity that is current in all denominations, that species of Christianity concerning which Irenæus boasted that it was "believed by the whole church, dispersed over all the world, from one end of the earth to the other."

Again, *Sabbath-schools conducted on the plan of the American Union will prepare the churches to avoid dissension about minor differences, and to husband their strength by fraternal concert and co-operation; will lead to the conception of gigantic schemes for the conversion of the world, and enable every man, woman, and child that loves the Lord, to engage in their execution.* The sameness of the principal books used, the monthly concert of Sabbath-



school teachers of different denominations, in our cities, and towns, and villages, and the occasional collection of the children of different schools for public anniversaries or other purposes, all tend to produce unity of spirit among the future soldiers of the cross, all tend to prepare them for cordial acknowledgment, and co-operation for advancing the cause of the Redeemer. Thus imbibing a spirit of universal love to the image of Christ wherever found, and cultivating an expanded sympathy for all the heathen world that is destitute of that image, and enveloped in superstition and wretchedness; and imbibing their principles of duty immediately from the millennial scale of the Bible, they will be trained up a set of labourers adapted for millennial schemes and millennial action! The Bible has always been a millennial book, its standard of duty has always been a millennial standard; but, after the apostolic age, and until of late, men contemplated its scale of duty and enterprise as through a glass darkly. God has opened the eyes of many. A higher and holier scale of duty is now regulating their works of faith and love. A more expansive spirit of benevolence is beginning to mark out the circumference of their sympathies. A few gigantic schemes have been conceived and executed. The nation has been supplied with Bibles; something was done to supply the country with Sabbath-schools. Other schemes remain to be devised. The next step should be definitely to undertake to supply our continent instead of our nation, with Sabbath-schools, with Bibles, with tracts, and with teachers: the object should be definitely kept in view and prosecuted to its attainment, and when a continent has thus been supplied, a similar



resolution should be jointly adopted by evangelical Christians in this country and Europe, to supply the world. The first step was thought by many to be visionary; but, under God, it was accomplished. The others, though now they seem, to many, as idle tales and they believe them not, would be as easy to Him who has the hearts of men in his hands; and though they would require more time and greater self-denial and devotion, they are all within the reach of sober calculation, and would only require Christians generally to do as much as some individual Christians are now doing.

Such, then, being the character and tendency of the Sabbath-school system, how powerful, how universal are its claims upon us! Do we profess to be patriots, and love the liberties of our country? Then let us aid the cause of Sabbath-schools, that the rising generation of our land, and especially those who are under counter influences, may be well instructed in that republican book, the Bible; that they may all learn from divine authority, that neither the pope nor any temporal ruler, but that Jesus Christ alone is the head of the church; that his kingdom is not a temporal kingdom, and ought not be connected with the state. Are we philanthropists, and do we mourn over the miseries inflicted on our race by vice and immorality, by injustice and oppression, and, above all, by that mother of all evils, that advocate of all violence and oppression, that lasting obstacle to the reign of the Redeemer, *war*? Then let us advocate Sabbath-schools to indoctrinate the nation with the principles of the Prince of peace, whose religion teaches goodwill to men, teaches all to avoid every vice, to love



justice, and to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. Do we cherish the hope of being Christians, then let our inmost souls be engaged in the cause of Sabbath-schools, as one of the most successful instrumentalities which God has owned for scattering salvation throughout our land and our world; an instrumentality twice blessed, blessed in giving and blessed in receiving instruction; an instrumentality available by all, by the rich and the poor, the old and the young, by males and females, either as teachers or contributors of moral or pecuniary aid; an instrumentality, finally, which bids fair to fill the church of Christ with faithful members, the heathen world with faithful missionaries, and heaven with blissful heirs of salvation.

THE END.



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forward to an ocean whose sky is dark and lowering ; by whose troubled waves thousands have been swallowed up ; and through which none has ever escaped ; over its bosom tempests never cease to blow, and peace never, never comes to the disconsolate hearts of those who are carried into its depths. You have not gone so far as to prevent your return, but each day, each moment you are progressing nearer to your ruin. Why will you destroy yourself ? Why seek your own ruin ? Why stiffen your neck and harden your heart against the Almighty ? Is it not enough that Christ has made an atonement for sin ? Will you make his sufferings of none effect and endure for yourself the wrath of an offended God, the vengeance of eternal fire ? Are the wages of sin so sweet, and the fruits of righteousness so bitter, that you deliberately prefer the former. I beseech you, yield yourself no longer to the deceitfulness of sin, but break the spell which has held you bound for many years and surrender yourself to the disposal of Christ your Saviour, who only has a sovereign right to your affections.